

BTT 2015 Plenary: Twenty Tips for Quality Infant-Toddler Caregiving

Dr. Alice Honig: It's a pleasure to be with you today. And probably we are going to go pretty fast because there are so many marvelous things to know about in order to be the best quality caregiver, parent, supervisor you ever wanted to be. The first tip I want to talk about is planning an environment to be warm and welcoming. So, if I am in an environment, that says, "Have you changed that one's diapers? Has that one had his bottle?" That doesn't feel warm and welcoming to me even though there are loads of toys and wonderful furniture all around the room.

It's very important for us to learn early milestones. And I call those wide windows like toilet learning. I'm sure some of you have little fellas who still needed diapers at night when they were 5 years old, and some 18-month-old little girl who said: "My big sister on the toilet. Me go potty." And she wants to be toilet trained early. That's a wide window because some children can learn much later than others. Some windows are much narrower like pincer prehension, picking up a Cheerio or a piece of dust under Mommy's couch with your thumb and forefinger only.

If you don't have that in by the end of the first year, if you are 14 months, I worry. So we need to learn when to worry, when to wonder, and when to be very delighted because something might be an advance for a child, that they have really learned something that we know the milestones of.

For example, if we give a tough food for a little child, even if they have a lot more teeth than another kid, rotary chewing — yum, yum, yum — the way you and I do, that doesn't come in until after 7 months. Kids go up and down, not rotary. So we really need to know developmental milestones. If your child does not have two-word phrases by age two, signal of worry. So, with knowing the milestones and which windows are wide and which are narrower will really help us be better caregivers.

Number two, we all flourish if we are well-fed and our tummies aren't hungry. Little babies have tiny tummies, and they empty pretty easily, so if a doctor says you don't have to nurse more than every four hours, you just say, "Yes, sir," and go out of the office and let your baby tell you when that baby is hungry. That tummy knows better than any grown-up.

Support breastfeeding in your centers by having a nice, soft rocking chair in a quiet corner where someone can breastfeed. Mother's milk has fantastic ability against Shigella, against many other difficulties of early intestinal upsets and mother's milk helps the gut close by four months against the macromolecules that cause most allergies, and cow's milk doesn't have that ability. So if you can, talk up breastfeeding among some of the moms who might think breasts are only for the boyfriends or something like that. Sorry to have said that. And model your own enjoyment of a new bit of food.

If you are very fussy about food, what do you expect the kids will be like? So, if you say, "Yum, yum, yum," to any new thing, you'll find out it's wonderful. When I picked up little carrot sticks in the center after the kids had finished lunch, and I went, "Yum, yum. I'm a bunny rabbit, I'm eating my carrots," guess what they all did out of the basket. Even though they had finished their lunch, they picked up the carrot sticks and went, "Yum, yum, yum," to them. "Crunch, crunch, crunch", and played bunny rabbit.

If you have a tiny little glass to pour some milk in or some juice from a large glass, that often helps if a child looks at you as if they are too scared to eat, to drink a great amount of food or to drink a great amount of liquid. When one mom on a home visit said, "You drink your milk." I had brought along a little whiskey shot glass. I don't drink whiskey, but I brought it along. And I said to the little one, "Would you like me to pour your milk into a teeny-weeny little glass?" She said, "Yes, lady." So I did. And she drank up the whole thing. I said, "Good drinking. Would you like some more milk?" And she said, "Yes, lady."

And guess what happened? She drank the whole glass of milk, but her mom would have been scolding her or even punishing her if she hadn't drunk what looked like too large a glass for that tiny little body. So be aware of what looks awfully big for a tiny child, and then see what you can figure out to help that little one.

Tune in to infant states. Infants learn best when in a calm, alert state. But they have many different states. They have states where they have deep sleep. They have crying states. They have awake, irritable, thrashing-around states. They have drowsy states where they look like a drunken sailor. You've seen that with the lids half-closed. [Babbles] When they are 4 months old maybe.

And you know they need a sleepy-nap, and you need to tuck them in very lovingly. So, watch for that quiet, alert state and that's your best chance if there is something you want baby to learn from you. Be aware of sensory integration troubles. That's when babies can't stand very loud noises.

One preschool teacher told me they had one child who climbed up on all the mats in the gym so high none of the teachers could get him down because he couldn't stand all the noise in the gym. I've had other toddlers cry because they couldn't stand — guess what — the tag on the T-shirt irritated them. So be aware that some of your children might be very, very sensitive about their skin or sounds or bright lights or even too many pictures in your room when you think it looks wonderful with all the children's drawings.

Just be sensitive to the fact that some kids do have sensory integration troubles. And high-risk babies with these troubles are harder to soothe, putting more stress on us as caregivers. We need to have something at home that soothes us, like your favorite ice cream when you get home or something like that. Emphasize positive discipline techniques.

A lot of families say no a lot more than they say yes. A lot of people tell a child what they are not supposed to do instead of something positive. Use the word gently over and over. For example, I was watching 14-month-old Angela in a rocking chair, and the little boy behind her was trying to be a help. So he was pushing the rocking chair, and Angela's face looked terrified. And I put my hand over his and said, "Angela likes you to rock her. She likes you to rock her gently like this. Thank you. That's such good rocking." Who was doing it from the beginning was me, of course, with my hand on his, but when I left my hand go, he kept on rocking more gently, and Angela's face no longer had terror on it.

So, "gently" is a word you have to use till it's coming out of your own ears. Conjure up empathic attunement. Your mirror neurons help you feel how others feel. And when you have psychopaths, God help us, in society, they don't care how others feel, but you want to conjure up your mirror neurons as an adult supervisor, or teacher or a parent or uncle or aunt or grandparent, and you want to help little ones feel for other little children.

I was doing a home visit, and the mother was a family daycare person. And she had a toddler in a highchair and she had her own toddler walking around in the kitchen. And the toddler in the highchair

who was new in her care dropped his cookie on the floor and started crying hard. And her own toddler's eyes widened. And he walked over and picked up the cookie. He loved cookies, but what did he do? He put it back on the highchair table and said, "No cwy, baby, no cwy." Remember, the letter "R," the sound doesn't come in until nearly 3 years of age for many kids. "No cwy, baby, no cwy." I thought that was so beautiful to see how he treated the other toddler empathically.

Make sure that you say beautiful words when someone does that kind of empathy. Ask yourself always, what is this child's behavior telling me? Become like Glinda the Good, to do good by children and avoid crazy making. Crazy making is when we say, "Oh, you did that terrifically, kid. That was wonderful! You really did that basketball throw terrifically. You know, if you practiced more, you could be a much better ball player." So, what happens? You gave a compliment together with a put-down. That is crazy making.

And a lot of people do it because I've heard it with my own eyes. So, please help with crazy making when you go to do family visits. And I have a lot of behavior guidance things in my little book on behavior guidance for infants and toddlers. Together you co-construct each child's unique, budding personality, become an expert decoder of the signal system that each child gives you.

If you put noodle pudding in front of a child that's only eaten rice, and you see the brows go like this and a line between the brows, decode to say, "I never saw that food before. Looks like poison. I don't know if I should try it." But if you don't decode body language, how will you know what someone's feeling? And we have to do that in marriages a lot more, too, but that's just an aside.

Playful encounters work wonders. Instead of saying, "Time for a diaper change. Leroy, come over here!" You say, "Mr. Diaper's calling you. Hi. Hi, Mr. Diaper!" Of course, a toddler who thinks that's amazing that his diaper can talk will walk over and let you pick up that nice, heavy body with a big fat tummy that's so beautiful on toddlers and put him on the table for a diaper change.

You are the message a child receives when being disciplined. It's interesting — I wanted to call this book "Positive Discipline for Infants and Toddlers." They wouldn't let me. They said most people think discipline means... You probably guessed it, huh? Punishment. Isn't that interesting? Discipline means what? To teach. So positive discipline. Use the magic triangle technique. And that's in my book "Playtime Learning Games."

And this is at fifth-grade reading level for any of you who have clients that you are working with who have... struggling still with learning English skills. The magic triangle means you don't just confront a child, the child and the adult, you work on what you are working on. This is an interesting book, or this is an interesting puzzle. Or you just picked up a red crayon next to the blue one. You choose red, red, red. So you are talking about the event or the object, the activity, the toy, rather than just talking straight across perhaps for a child who's fairly new in your facility and is not as trusting or comfortable yet.

Making the magic triangle helps and eases the work. And also, children get so focused on the activity. Tempo is important in all love relationship. I don't have to tell you about that as a grown-up. But I will tell you that in some centers that I visited, all the toddlers are on the floor crawling around except one delicious little fellow who's still sitting, eating a half a grilled cheese sandwich, "Yum, yum, yum," peacefully, when everyone else is finished. Maybe you as a grown-up have friends that eat much slower than you. Some of us are slower, some of us are faster.

Watch the tempo of how you speak. And how you pick up a child like a sack of potatoes or more gently. Tempo is so important. Tempo of making love for grown-ups I don't have to tell you about, but tempo with kids, we do need to watch out more for. Promote secure attachment. Loving touch is crucial to secure attachment.

In one research that was done, babies who unfortunately had died at 24 months, autopsies were done on the brains without the autopsy person knowing who had been lovingly stroked and touched a lot, who had been neglected and not touched. Those babies who had not been touched much at all had 20% less brain capacity.

Your skin is a fantastic, enormous organ of your body, much bigger than your lungs or your liver or your kidneys or anything else. Skin needs to be stroked. If you stroke your baby while you are doing diapering, have you noticed that their little legs go out like this, as if, "My skin feels so delicious. She really or he really loves diapering me and dressing me and undressing me. I'm delicious to someone."

Don't you wish some grown-ups thought that about us? Attachments are coded, as Mary Ainsworth has taught us, as secure or different kinds of insecure ratings, hesitant/ambivalent. When a child's hesitant/ambivalent — I watch them — When mom comes back into the room to get them. They may

run toward her, but I've seen them when she picks the child up, actually slap at mom or squirm to get down, very ambivalent. That is sometimes mommy's there for them, and sometimes she ignores them completely, and sometimes she does what they need but only on her time schedule. And babies need us, you know, 26 hours a day on their schedules when they are young.

Then there are avoidant babies who look so mature when they come into daycare. "Oh, Dr. Honig, they never even cried the first day of being in daycare." I get scared. Babies are uncomfortable when they come into new environments or have new foods. If the baby seems perfectly okay and has learned how to not ask for attention or loving or cuddling, it means that somebody's taught them that they are not going to get that loving/cuddling when they need it.

Actually, I think the worst thing I ever watched when a plane was late in an airport was a little 4-year-old trying to lean against his mom, lean against her. She said, "Don't get too near to me, you'll scratch my Gucci shoes!" You know how I felt about Gucci shoes ever since then. Because the planes were late and he really needed a cuddle. And then the insecure attachment that is the most recently discovered sort of mixture of hesitant and avoidant is called dazed/disorganized. And we are finding a lot more mental health troubles in adulthood with people with that third insecure attachment.

And attachment is an interesting learning by young children. We need to nurture that secure attachment. And children balance their needs for brave exploration with their needs for secure attachment. So, you might be the favorite caregiver of a little one who's learned to crawl, and he pads across the floor as if you don't even exist in the room because he sees an interesting toy over there. But God help us if that little one gets scared or tired or tumbles off the stool that he climbed on to get that toy. What will he do? He'll rush over for a hug, for reassurance. Or he throws himself on your body if you're lying on the floor.

We have to have at least one secure attachment should be the birthright of every single child who's born. One secure attachment. And if there is not a secure attachment in the home, then you as a caregiver are such a precious person not only in the eyes of that child but, to me, in the eyes of God for creating that one secure attachment.

And that's why I believe in wrap-around care, where you stay with your group of infants and toddlers from 0 to 3. Because then you can know more deeply and respond more accurately and sensitively to the signals of your little one. And a baby creates a separate attachment relationship with every single person who cares for that infant.

So I have gone on a home visit where Mom made a lot of money and actually nursed her babies because she knew that was the dutiful thing to do. But she was always busy with business. But when baby came from across the room on four paws and papa said, "Can you come to Papa? Can you come to Papa?" his eyes lit up, and he ran to throw himself on his four paws. And his papa lifted him up. So in that family, he had a much stronger secure attachment to Papa than to Mom.

Each attachment is formed individually. That's such a powerful, important thing for caregivers to know because you might be that one person who provides that deeply secure loving, cuddling attachment for a baby who truly needed you to be in the right place at the right time in that job, no matter how low that damn salary was, excuse my expression.

We need to know about what happens if you're brought up with insecure attachments. And that work has been done by Dr. Strobe. And he found that when he knew the infancy attachment classification of an infant at 12 months and brought these babies back as preschoolers and set up a preschool with highly trained preschool teachers, African-American, white, highly trained teachers, men and women, and put the children all together with all their different classifications, then he took them out in pairs.

Teachers did not know who was being asked to go out to a special toy room. And he watched through the one-way screen. What did he see? Those babies who had been classified as insecure avoidantly unattached infants, as preschoolers, were now behaving more likely as bullies. And bullying whom? The babies who had been classified as hesitant/ambivalent at 12 months. And the hesitant/ambivalent ones were now preschoolers. And sometimes they'd say, "Ain't you going to try to take my toy away from me no more?" So, do you see what's happening? You might think, okay, attachment is at one year.

That's when researchers get a hold of a measure of the Ainsworth attachment procedure of 20 minutes. What does it mean for us if we teach preschoolers or older kids? I'm telling you, we now have research through teenagers, better relationships with your new boyfriend or girlfriend in college, and through 32

years of age, we now have research about the long-term effects of having a secure versus an insecure attachment. That's powerful.

A lot of folks don't know about the importance of secure attachment in a child's life. I've been in a center where they say, "But, we hold babies, Dr. Honig." So, they are sitting on the floor holding a baby and looking around the room, but is anyone making a relationship with that creature? Holding it in face, 12 to 18 inches away, and talking to it and rubbing noses and telling it how beautiful that creature is. I also have to tell you that secure attachment is like buying the best insurance in the world for later emotional development.

Mothers who were highly critical had preschoolers who were more aggressive. But if the babies had been very securely attached to that mother in infancy, then they were not more aggressive as preschoolers. That's good insurance when you can really say, okay, this is protective against trouble later on, that the teacher shouldn't call me up and tell me my kid has been a bad kid or something.

Research is very powerful for me. I call it ammunition 'cause it teaches me why I need to know more about a given part of child development. What are signs of secure attachment to you? Draping, molding, cuddling on you. If a baby drapes and really lets you cheek-to-cheek hold that baby...

I remember Berry Brazelton said to me, "When I pick up a baby and I hold him, and he snuggles right into the crook of my neck, Alice Honig, I wish I were a woman, I could have a let-down reflex for milk." I thought that was one of the sweetest things anyone had ever said to me. That was beautiful. Accepts soothing comfort readily from you. Greets with smiles and open arms when you come back from peeing or having a coffee break. Uses your body as a refueling station.

So, if somebody knocks down his block tower, and Joe's lying on the floor, all six-foot of him, waiting for his toddler to finish building, he throws himself in Joe's arms, and I've watched that. That's beautiful. And what parents need to know from you, if you have secure attachment when the terrible 2s occur, then baby is four times more likely to be cooperative, says the researcher who's watched for this, than if they had been insecurely attached. That is really important to know about.

And I love what John Bowlby, the psychiatrist in England who first started us learning about attachment, he wrote, "A child's anger is often an expression of a frustrated desire for love and care," and that's still true today over 60 years later. We are not the only ones who need loving and hugs, baby. Baby polar bears need them, too. And generously accept lovies.

I get calls and e-mails from caregivers. "Is It all right if he brings his blankie to daycare?" Of course it is! Some of us that I've met can't be without their cigar or their cigarette. Whose lovie is that? Or their glass of liquor. Whose lovie is that? And Linus, of course, needs his blanket. He is not the only one who desperately needs his lovie.

Now let's switch to talk about promoting language skills. I have watched some of the most beautiful caregivers take walks with children. And they are holding the rope, and the kids are being so well-behaved. And the two teachers are doing what, talking to each other the whole trip long along the walk to the park and even in the park.

So, I wanted to show you the research findings. Do you notice something — babies and toddlers from poor families heard 600 words an hour. Working class families, 1,200 words a hour, professional families, 2,100 words an hour. In a poor family, a child has heard 30 million fewer words at home compared with a 3-year-old in a professional family.

And we say every child comes to kindergarten and education is free in the United States. Children are equally able to learn. Are they truly really able to learn if there is a three million-word gap? So we need to promote language skills, and how do we help? When you hear an infant cooing [cooing] talk to that baby.

As a scientist, I was doing a home visit, and that baby had been nursed and loved for three whole weeks. And when mom called his name and he said, "Ooh", she said, "Ooh" back. I noted in my notebook 16 cooing turns at three weeks of age. Babies can be powerful speakers. They just don't speak English or Spanish or Russian right away. But they can talk with us in turn-taking talk.

I heard a mother say to me when I said to her 9-, 10-month-old, I showed him two pictures and I said, "Which one's meat and which one's cookies? Can you point...?" He had a good pointing finger. "Can you

point to cookies?" And he stared straight ahead. And she said, "Why are you doing a fool thing like that, doctor? I don't talk to my kids until they start to talk."

Do you see we have a lot of home visitation work that has to be done very slowly, lovingly, and carefully? If someone has not been taught that. Now, maybe you also see why I really would be in favor of child development courses in high schools and junior high school. I think that's something we need to learn before we come have a baby without any attached instructions. So we need to be generous turn-taking talk, we need to give that. We need to use a lot of Socratic questions.

I remember cutting pictures out of magazines, and I showed this 3-and-a-half-year-old, a picture from an insurance company that showed two men pulling a sofa outside a window and it looked pretty dark in that magazine photo. And I said to this little fella, "What do you think is happening here?" An open-ended question, and he looked. He said, "Teacher, them be thiefters." And they were. Of course he didn't know that you have to take "F" and change it to "V" when you are doing the plural. He didn't know any of those fancy things. But he was so right. I think the insurance company did it beautifully. Those were theifters that wanted to steal that. I thought that was so beautiful.

And Socratic questions help children think. Suppose you were wearing your best shoes and daddy took you for a walk and there was a stream of water from a big rainstorm, and if put the shoes in it they'd get wet, what could you think to do so your shoes wouldn't get wet? What could a child think to do? Put stones in there to stand on? Hop way over by jumping? Put logs in the water? Ask Papa to carry you? Do you see with an open-ended question you get lots of possibilities for hypothesizing and giving reasons for things.

And children from poverty families in Joan Tough's work in England, even though they were playing outside with their best friend, did not use language as much for giving reasons or making hypotheses. And that's really important.

We need also to emphasize humor. A 2-year-old whose daddy played tennis climbed on the bed, took his empty canister from which he had tennis balls out to go with his friend to play tennis on a Sunday morning. Put her foot in it, looked at her daddy, and said, "Shoe, shoe." She was making a joke as if the tennis can — could be a shoe. That's a joke. Please listen for jokes. Sometimes they're a little hard because they only have one-word speech so far.

I'll never forget the Russian child psychologist who's daughter came in and said, "Daddy, 'oggies' meow." Doggies meow. He said, "Oh, no, honey, doggies go arf, arf, arf or they go woof, woof." "Daddy, 'oggies' meow, meow." After four times he said — he wrote in his book, "I finally caught on. I said, 'Of course honey bunch, and doggies go — doggies go yow Oh, then kitty cats say arf, arf, arf.'" She fell down on the floor in laughter because finally her father caught on that she had a sense of humor. It's very important. Humor is so important for little kids.

They giggle and laugh at the silliest things. Give children words for feelings, as well as for circles and squares and colors, which we do in the classroom. Give words for feeling. I was taking care of a doctoral student's child because she had no one and she promised her husband they would go out shopping.

And when the little one got up from the nap, she looked at me as if who's this lady, who's here, on her brows, you know that look. And I said, "You were expecting Mama and Papa, but they had to go shopping. They'll be home soon. I bet you're feeling so mad and so sad 'cause you wanted to see mama and papa. You were feeling mad. You were feeling sad." And I said, "Can I please change your diaper?" And I took her out and changed her and we went downstairs and we played house.

Three hours later, there is a key in the door, her mother and father walked in and she runs to the front door and says, "Me so mad, me so sad." She remembered those feeling words for how long, three hours. You know feeling words are ones you really want to teach little children because they remember those ones. They may not remember disappointed or exulted, but mad and glad and sad and happy, they're good at.

Help children become positive, passionate book lovers. You are the tour guide in charge of a book. Change a story if you are in a center where there is not much money for infancy books, borrow some from the preschool teacher. And then change the story.

So I'm reading "Curious George" with a 19-month-old whose mother says to me, "I don't ever let him near a book. He tears books, lady." And she glared at me. And I said to her, "It will be all right." And I cuddled him and I said, "Look, there is a monkey! A monkey with a brown tail. Put your finger on his tail. Thank you. Where's his two eyes?" Took us 10 minutes to get through the first page. You put your finger

in the book, and look what there is on the next page, another monkey! Did I read "Curious George"? No way. He had not been read to.

By the way, that was not a poverty mom. She had a master's degree. But did she know about little babies? Zero. And he loved the book. We went through the whole "Curious George" finding more and more monkeys on every page. Choose cardboard and oilcloth book. Babies can squish them. Some of them actually float in a tub.

Please don't choose the books with those plastic rings in the center 'cause teething baby can bite those. Dialogic reading means that you talk about the stories. Help babies really become passionate book lovers like "The Cat in the Hat." Why do babies love that, toddlers? 'Cause they're so naughty, Thing 1 and Thing 2 who mess up a house terribly. Read books with rhymes. "Nose and Rose." In Spanish you could read about "Rosa and Mariposa" — a rose and a butterfly. Read with a lot of expression in your voice. If you read, [monotone] "There is a dog. His name is Spot. He has black spots".

I've older watched kids start elbowing each other in a circle on the floor. But you need to read with such interest in the book. And read books that promote kindness like "The Little Engine" that said, "I think I can. I think I can," when the big blue train wouldn't go across the mountain bringing toys to little kids. Or "Horton Hatches an Egg" or "Horton Hears a Who."

So, now let's see a baby who's about 10, 11 months old, whose mom has read to him and his grandma and grandpa have read to him. Let's see what he looks, how he feels about a book. [Video begins] [Babbling] Then you turn the page after you've read a whole page. You figure out what's on the page. [Babbling] Put it away. But I can't bear to put a book away. 'Cause I love a book, so I catch it right back again. [Video ends]

This is the grandson of the lady who published my book "Best for Babies," which was just published last November. Look at that delicious baby. Okay, and I can go right on then. I thought you would like to see what happens. Baby professor. So young.

The next topic I want to talk about is babies' temperaments. I really don't have an hour to go into all the nine temperament traits, but the nine temperament traits you may have had in other webinars. And they cluster into three main styles: the easy, flexible, adaptable child who shrugs it off, for example.

I had a 19-month-old visiting with me when I was living in my flat in Paris when I was doing research there on iron deficiency, anemia in babies. And I just had a yogurt cup and big spoon. And... took him downstairs to dig in the sand. And a little toddler came by and grabbed the spoon and ran off with it. He looked at that, shrugged, and then used his hand to put more sand in the yogurt cup.

The mother of the little one who had run off with the spoon ran after her daughter to get the spoon back. And she said — [Speaking French] "I'm very jealous, lady. My little girl is an earthquake." And she was an earthquake. She rushed by and grabbed that spoon so fast.

But the easy-going child, everybody wishes they had one of those, but we never are told which ones we'll have. I often ask people if you had the other kinds first and not the easy-going kind, would you ever have another one? Some babies are very feisty. You need to have a rocking chair — a rocking horse in the corner where they can bounce up and down. Some toddlers cannot sit still a moment. They only run. They don't know how to walk. If you have a very feisty kid, they might actually laugh out loud vigorously. But they also might scream louder if you take away something they like.

Watch out for the temperament that's partly inborn for the little ones in your care. Then, they are slow to warm up, shy, suspicious child. Dr. Kagan's research at Harvard shows us you can move at least half of those children to be more easy sociably, but there will always be some kids who are really quite shy and reserved about new foods, new places, new persons.

You might take a kid who's well toilet trained, for example, we call it toilet learning, to the mall. But there are so many strangers around, they pee in their pants because they are frightened of new places. Be careful that you don't see that rocking back and forth that I sometimes see in centers. I often see that it's the quiet, shy, non-demanding baby who needs attention.

And by the way, babies are amazing. I went up to a baby rocking like that, and I sat with him for a while in a childcare center. Then I realized he had no toy to play with. And I thought, where is the toy box? I looked in the corner and thought, I think I see a toy box. And I got up, but forgot to tell the baby. And he sees me walking away and he started crying. And I turned around and I apologized. I said, "Jason, I apologize. I'm sorry I forgot to tell you. I thought maybe at your age, you're just sitting up, maybe you

need a shake-shake toy or a rattle. I was going try to find one for you. I promise I'll be right back." He stopped crying instantly. I ran and found a rattle and came and sat back down with him.

When I asked the teachers later in debriefing what they had seen, they looked at each other. I said, "Did you think Dr. Honig was a bit addled to talk that seriously to a tiny baby?" And they said, "Yes." But what happened? Somehow he understood and stopped crying and waited patiently for me to come back with a toy. What he understood semantically, I don't know. But he understood the goodwill. And children will understand your goodwill and our apologies, also.

Temperament interacts with a caring style. So you're going to have more trouble with some of your feisty kids, that's for sure. The thing I do want to assure you of is the research. In Holland that's so marvelous, by Van den Boom.

She took 100 low-income, highly irritable babies. She divided them randomly into two groups. And one half the group of 50 babies were home visited by caregivers who knew how to swaddle babies, how to help mothers tone down their tempo, how to help mothers do massaging, stroking. And those babies, only those babies at the end of 12 months, were two thirds securely attached, with much lower rates of secure attachment in those highly irritable babies brought up in poverty who had not received that marvelous home visitation.

So bless all of you who help parents who have very, very highly irritable or feisty babies because you might make the difference in helping them learn how to deal with the difficulties by first swaddling, using a calmer tone, using soothing cadences. Customize your approaches to infants. Your words and actions are the mirrors by which a child learns early to feel, I'm good or I'm bad.

Oops. Hank, can you help me I think I made a mistake here. I need to get into tip number nine. Okay. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Choose toys that are appropriate at developmental levels to enhance attention span, pretend play, persistence in play. And these are extremely important skills. Have you ever been in a childcare where one child is wandering while others are playing well with dolls or blocks or choo-choo train toys and one is just wandering flicking toys off the tables? Allow generous amounts of time for self-directed play.

Become a marvelous matchmaker. I don't mean finding a boy or a girl to be a boyfriend or girlfriend when kids are little. I do mean matching your interactions and experiences and toy presentations and events with the level at which a child is at. I was in a center where the caregiver seemed to be so loving, but she put busy board for a 2-and-a-half-year-old on the highchair tray for a 10-month-old. What did he do with it? Knocked it off.

We need to match something — We know that busy boards are interesting, but maybe a busy board that is something you just shove one direction or push it back and forth for that age child. And maybe with one finger because he is learning — that, that, that. To have that beautiful second finger point at things. Make sure you sing with your babies. Singing brings joy.

I just read an article that if you play soothing music for cows they will produce more milk. So we know that we are mammals, too. And singing is something that if it's our kind of music, haven't you sometimes listened to something and think, "Boy, that really resonates with the way I'm feeling"?

Teach songs with clapping and body music. ♪ The wheels on the bus go round and round ♪ They love the part where, ♪ The babies on the bus go wah, wah, wah ♪ Toddlers just adore that part. And there are so many verses, that if you forget one like, ♪ The windshield wipers on the bus go, swish, swish, swish ♪ The kids will remind you if you've sung it enough. Sing lullabies to soothe babies into sleep.

I don't care what language you were brought up in. If it's Italian, Russian, French, Spanish, sing to the children, because lullabies over the centuries were meant to soothe babies into sleep. They even were called swaddling songs in the Middle Ages. Some of the ones you probably know are, ♪ Hush little baby don't say a word ♪ ♪ Papa's going to buy you a mocking bird ♪ I like songs that have papa in them, as well as mama.

And I love, ♪ Summertime, and the livin' is easy ♪ But I always sing it, ♪ Your mama's rich and your daddy's good-lookin' ♪ I make it a little different from the way everybody else sings it. And then I love the one in Russian. ♪ Singing in Russian ♪ ♪ The silver moon is looking down into your cradle ♪

And then in Spanish. ♪ Singing in Spanish ♪ This beautiful little baby wants to go to sleep, but the naughty dream won't come. And so he closes his eyes, and then they open again, it goes on. It's so beautiful and loving. Whatever the language of your people, don't worry about singing in that language.

I used to take care of babies from very poor families, young children and preschoolers in Coney Island. I put them for nap outside — not the babies, the preschoolers — and I would do modern poetry in cadences for them and they fell asleep to that also. I'm sure they didn't understand Marianne Moore, but that's okay.

Babies and young children love cadences. And so your voice and singing help them soothe into sleep. And babies are born to dance. If you go in a circle of teachers, and you give each little one, toddler, a piece of nylon scarf, and you put on music. You know. ♪ La, da, da-da, la, da, da-da ♪ They will dance around.

I think you can remember that. Encourage prosocial peer interactions. Tune in to the tiniest kinds of positive, specific attributes. You were such a kind friend to Sarah. She held out her teddy bear, and you said, "Want teddy take a ride?" And you helped drag her teddy into your wagon for a ride. That was very kind of you.

Specific prosocial interactions. You moved over so Johnny could sit next to you at the table because he loves Play-Doh, too. You saw that Tiana did not have enough crayons and you have a big bunch, so you gave her your blue one and your red crayon. Thank you. That was so kind of you, so generous of you. Your words and actions are the mirrors by which a child learns to feel good or bad. Keep alert for prerequisites of skill building. To learn a new skill, we have to have the prerequisites in place.

If the parent came to the center and said, "I want you to toilet train my child right away," I would say, "That's wonderful," not, "We don't do that in this center at 1 year of age." I would say, "Let's see if all the prerequisites are in place. Can he feel already when a poop is coming? Uh-huh. Is he able to run to the potty, or is he still learning to walk a little more sturdily? And are his Betz cells from the motor cortex fully myelinated all the way down to the urethra and sphincters for bowel movements?"

You do that one for a parent, you'll really snow them, of course. And they will know that you know a lot of child development. You are not just a babysitter, you are a child development specialist and a quality caregiver. "And can a little one sit still for a few minutes on a potty and know words for poop and pee? Can the toddler pull down his own pants? Can he put the peepee right in the toilet?"

I worked with children with — slow learning disabilities for a long time at a wonderful program. And I had to teach the 6-year-olds, that when you pee, you can't pee straight up and get it in my face. You have to put your penis down into the toilet. That was hard for my 6-year-olds to learn, but eventually they did learn it.

So, these are prerequisite skills. So when someone says, "I want you to toilet train" or, "I want my kid reading by this age," say, "Oh, that's wonderful," to a parent. "Let's see if the prerequisites are there." What do you need to learn to read? The difference between the black squiggles that are words and pictures, we read from top to bottom, how we turn pages in a book. That the squiggles say something about the pictures. Look at how many prerequisites we have for a book for reading.

And the prerequisites for getting food on the spoon into your mouth. Myelination of the great motor neurons that have that white fatty sheath of myelin around the wrist for wrist control sometimes are not in between 18 and 24 months. — The first slide was about knowing our norms. So, if the kid spills a lot of food and they are very young, even though they have a lot of teeth, it may be because they haven't got those prerequisites in.

Decide when an action is aggressive or developmentally expectable. If a baby's crawling, and they see an interesting toy and they crawl over very fast and there happens to be another baby on the floor, and they squash him a little bit as they are crawling over. One of my student said to me, "Oh, that was aggression, Dr. Honig." No, it wasn't. He was just going for his toy. He didn't happen to notice there was a small person lying on the floor in the way.

So you need to deal with one aggression that we do see more of in group care and that's biting. We used to safety pin with a very good safety pin, a biter, which was cool from the refrigerator so that they could bite. Your biter when you need to bite. Persons aren't for biting, but your biter is. Go find your biter. That rubber toy you need.

And another center that I was a consultant in, also. I found that the child had not been cuddled or caressed or spoken to for five whole minutes every time before he bit. So we made sure that he was shadowed for a few weeks so that he got that attention.

Enhanced motor skills. Hang a yarn ball over a baby to kick her legs. Arrange for toddlers to dance with nylon scarves. Do parades. Toddlers love parading. Make sure you have enough little drums for each toddler. Stretch and curl and march and twirl. Hop like a bunny. Fly like an airplane. Grab each other's ankles and slither around the room. Gallop like ponies. Pretending is wonderful.

I once watched this delicious little toddler at the table. She picked up a carrot stick and said, "Teacher, I'm doing my eyebrows." She took the carrot stick and pretended she was doing her eyebrow pencil like her mama did. Provide safe sensory experiences. — Teach polar opposites. Wet versus dry, sour versus sweet, honey... We used to put honey on top of lemon juice on a teaspoon for some of the toddlers to taste.

And bumpy kidney beans I would paste on a piece of cardboard so they could close their eyes and feel bumpy compared with something that was silky smooth like the cornstarch glop or the silky smooth petals of a pansy or a petunia that you touch gently. And warm/cold basins, those are good for polar opposites.

Kids by 24 months should know a lot of polar opposites. They know, what, big and little, right? Up and down. And I've heard them say, "heavy" when something's heavy. What's hard is the polar opposite of shallow versus deep. That's really much too hard for toddlers. Rejoice in outdoor sensory surprises. Planting veggies, sifting sand, squishing mud. Kids love to squish mud. You live in a climate where you can do that. We have snow in Syracuse six months a year. You can squish mud through your toes at a childcare center. Yes, you need a hose before you come inside. But, oh, how they love it.

Have you ever been to a beach and noticed how little crying there sometimes is? 'Cause kids love gloppy stuff. They love water play, mud play, sand play. They love sifting through sandboxes to find little plastic, tiny dinosaurs. Sifting through rice maybe. Listening to birdies singing. If you have a bird feeder outside of your center. Some of your kids will really learn the difference between a robin's call or a sparrow's chirping.

And watching earthworms. Did you know that earthworm are bisexual? They have male and female sexual parts? So when a kid finds an earthworm and the teacher says, "Put down that gloppy thing," which I happened to hear in a daycare, please tell them that's an earthworm and tell them how good it is for helping the Earth be nice and fluffy so that little plants that they've planted if they're planting their own veggies, they can grow better because of the earthworm.

And how they love what? When you blow bubbles. Then you combine sensory and motor experiences. Look at the joy. Look at that joy on that child's face. I can catch a bubble! And by the way, kids like bubbles until they are 9 years of age, sometimes more. Bubble play is cheap, and it's marvelous for sensory/motor integration, so that you are more graceful about catching the bubbles. Be alert to early mental health troubles.

I had a little one in our center who drew me such a pretty picture of a car or a bus. And I recognized it very well. All of a sudden she took a brown crayon and smashed the crayon so that it was all obliterated. And she just stared at me.

Now, if that happens because the kid has had a poor experience like one child that happened to me, and the child's father had been taken to the hospital in an ambulance. I understood why she obliterated her picture. But for this little one, things seemed okay, and they really weren't. And so that gave me one of the first feelings something is not okay with this child.

And a baby should be able to look in your face and find out whether something is scary. Scan your face. Is it okay? And they should be able to give you clear signals, and they should be able to point where they want you to take down a toy, and they should be able to follow your points. Of course, if you have a child with autistic syndrome, then that child may not be able to follow a point. Or if you hide a toy and go, choo, choo, choo, choo, that child may not look to the other side to see the choo-choo train coming by.

So, watch out because sometimes mental health troubles, unfortunately, we see them fairly early. Compulsive anything bothers me. Most babies touch their clitoris, they touch their vulva, they touch their penis when they have to go to sleep sometimes. But if you see compulsive masturbation, compulsive all day long and in public, like one little teacher called me up and she had a second grader standing up and masturbating staring at her, something is terribly wrong with mental health. It turned

out that child had been forced to watch his own parent abuse his younger sister, so we need to watch out. We think mental health are problems of teens and grown-ups. No. They might start early. We need to watch out. Be alert to these early mental health troubles. Look for compulsive body rocking, lack of eye contact, facial grimaces, indifference to others' feelings of pain or hurt, floppy bodies, aggressive responses.

I was in a home visit with a 4-year-old and his mom trying to teach them to use the Etch A Sketch with very simple horizontal lines. And the baby in the next room cried. He got up from the couch where I was working with him and the mom, ran in, and really hit the baby hard. That worries me when you see this aggression very early. Hand flapping, echolalia.

The other thing I've seen that worries me is, "Mom, I brought a kit with all kinds of toys like that pegboard postal box where you hammer the pegs down." The mother picked up the hammer. She went over to the baby and said, "I could hurt you with this," and he giggled wildly. So, if you see giggling to an aggression act by an adult, that's a mental health sign.

Enhance aesthetic delights, colorsapes, aromasapes, lights, hanging plants, growing bulbs, hanging up cheap posters like Renoir's "Two Sisters," or some Japanese beautiful pictures of snowy mountains and a bridge and river. Awaken babies' natural delights in beauty.

I had to learn that the babies loved our goldfish. They'd say to me, "shishy, shishy," they couldn't pronounce the fricative "F." I said, "Beautiful shishy." And that toddler said, "No shishy, teacher. Shishy!" Because he could hear that I said "shishy," but he knew it should be "fishy." But I forgot to buy a top because it was too expensive. We had to have the parents make us one out of wood 'cause they were taking the fishies out for a walk to be kind to them. So, I learned you have to have a top for your fish tank.

And I remember one of the preschoolers I work with who was much older came in the garden one day and said, "The red noses are up! The red noses are up!" Anybody can guess. I guess it was the peonies. The red noses are up. He didn't know the name. But he was in such joy.

Become the best model for children and their families. Teach the power of positive reinforcement. If a child does something you do like, say something positive to him or her. Become a parent coach, as well

as an emotionally sensitive child coach. Feed parents when you have meetings. When we prepared salads and pasta and had French bread and a dessert, all of our teenage moms in our center even brought their boyfriends along. So, this is a good way to get papas into your center to show off how beautifully your children are flourishing.

Teach parents how to turn a chore into a game. Teach about authoritative parent, where you are firm, have clear rules, but you are genuinely invested in your child versus — overly permissive or authoritarian, "Do as I say 'cause I'm your father or mother." Shame is corrosive to a child's soul. Shame corrodes a child's soul, and they will hate forever because of being shamed.

And we see a lot of that in this world. Aggression because someone was shamed long before they had good language. Erik Erikson tells us shame occurs during that second year of life. Doubt, shame, rage, versus the feeling of I'm okay. A lot of people aren't taught that. That's why I still think we need to teach child development in junior high school.

Give simple choices to a toddler. "Do you want to sleep with your head at that side of the crib or that?" "Do you want orange juice or apple juice?" It's your child as an adult. Even though a child cannot remember cherishing with words, he will remember in his body or her body your loving-kindness, your smiles, your delight, your caresses, your teaching.

Partner positively with parents. Enrich children's lives with book sharing. Be a clear model if you are a supervisor. Encourage caregivers, but try to be very patient. They may have grown up with being spanked. We now know that spanking increases aggression and decreases language and vocabulary in children who are spanked. But if that's the world they grew up in, you'll have to help them understand a different way without making them feel that their parents were bad with them. Nobody likes to feel they grew up in a family that did wrong thing.

Tune in to the verbal interactions. Watch the faces of the people that you teach so that you know by the body language and verbal interactions with the people you are training if you are a supervisor how well things are getting through. And if possible, try to ask someone to tell you about how they see what's happening with the child, how they interpret the child's signals.

Teach the four-letter word "lure." Lure children forward, L-U-R-E. There are a lot of four-letter words in our culture that I don't care for. But this is one I just love. We lure children forward to new levels of learning. And provide specific admiring words to emphasize any positive teacher interactions you have noticed.

Teachers are hungry for supervisor positive interactions. I remember a teacher saying, "Dr. Honig, when you go around the country, if you give a talk, do you tell them how good we are with the kids?" I said, "I sure do, Janie." Even her picture is in my infant caregiving book. Because you think maybe they just get lovely feelings from being with the kids they share things with, but they also want to know from supervisors.

And one of the things that you might want to read to a teacher is, this is what happens in the toddler times. For toddlers, this is what will happen, "I'm the no-no bird, that's me. I live up in the Tantrum Tree. I'm a no-no bird. I won't say why. I stamp my feet and I shout and I cry, "I'm the no-no bird." I sulk and sing, No, no, no," to everything. And that would make teaching about toddler behaviors a little more fun for some of your teachers that you are training to listen to.

Use humor and provide rewards for some of your caregivers. And then follow up. I tried to teach with one of my doctoral students teachers to extend the language of children in longer conversations. And we did that. But then when we came back six months later, they went down to making sure this one's okay, that one, and then go right on to the next one, so you want to check up. Okay.

Our last slide, then. Rejoice in your competence. Rejoice in your cherishing. Feel pride that your precious work as a teacher or supervisor will set the foundation for an entire lifetime of positive personality growth for each child. Love is a language that the blind can read. Love is a language that the deaf can hear. In giving to little ones, in giving to those who we counsel and teach, we also receive.

Go forth and be the best infant/toddler care provider and supervisor that you can possibly be. Blessings and thank you so much for being with us for this special virtual conference. Thank you. [Applause]

Moderator: Thank you, Dr. Honig. That was beautiful. So, we have a few questions for you. The first one is, "So many times, the adults caring for infants, even the parents, have insecure attachment histories. How can they give what they themselves never received, and how can we help them?"

Dr. Honig: That's a very, very beautiful question. I do believe that we can change if we have someone who believes in us and loves us. I met a teacher once in a Southern state who every hair on her head was beautifully coifed. Usually we are kind of messy when we work with kids. And she said, "I'll never have children, Dr. Honig. I was beaten by my father. He never understood young kids." I came back to that same state eight years later. She'd married, and she brought forth this tiny toddler because she'd married such a loving, kind, admiring person.

She worked for Head Start, and her husband admired all her skills. And she felt well enough and nurtured enough to redo the pain from the past. Can we always redo the pain? Not always, but you can find that part in you that heals, that says, "I am a child of God. I'm worthy of love. I'm worthy of loving. And, yes, terrible things happened to me, and I will get up and go forth."

And one father said to me, "I was hurt so much by my parents, and I had three marriage that failed. But with my 4-year-old, I'm doing everything I wished they had done with me. And you know what, Dr. Honig? Now I feel like a much better person," because of what he was giving that he wished had been given unto him. So thank you for that important question because I'm not saying we can heal all the damage, but we can go forth if someone helps us with nurturing.

Moderator: Very nice. Thank you. One of the questions is, "There is so much important information we want our staff to be aware of. And this can become overwhelming at times. Do you have a suggested order for how to approach these professional-development topics with our staff?"

Dr. Honig: Okay, well, now you are asking for my favorites, okay, and how I list them, so what's going to be first? Secure attachment and loving-kindness. And the second one, power in language. And then if you don't diaper so hot or you don't play the music so well or you can't sing on pitch or you don't know quite as many games of "The Wheels on the Bus," okay. But the first two.

And please don't try to stuff everything the way I've done this morning into one talk. We had to do this for the webinar. But if you choose your topics, we did choose quite a few topics. But the first one is the loving-kindness, and the second one is the power of language and books. Thank you for asking. That's such an important thing for supervisors. I appreciate that.

Moderator: Great. "As a home visitor, I would like some ideas on how to share information about self-regulation and dysregulation with parents in a way that is understandable and not overwhelming."

Dr. Honig: Okay. Self-regulation is so important, and it means that we can stop doing something that parents consider naughty. For instance, you saw the first picture on my slide. I don't know if Hank could get me back to the first slide. But that little baby in my granddaughter's arms is now 8 months and crawling all over the place. But he's been nursed and loved and talked to so lovingly by father, mother, grandparents out in Michigan that when he creeps toward a plug in the wall.

Have you ever seen a kid who's been burned by a plug? I have, and it's a horrible burn on the finger. She says, "That's not for touching. It's not good for touching," and he'll move away. Beautifully, he has self-regulation for that at 8 months. How did she do that? Not by saying, "No, don't touch. Get away. Sit down. Be good." You have to talk with children in a loving way. How do you regulate the way Angela was being rocked in that rocking chair? She looked terrified. Gently. And then I did a gentle rocking.

Tempo is so important. If you're screaming and rushing a child, kids don't like to be rushed. One little 6-year-old said, "You know why I like my grandma to take me to the mall better than Mommy and Daddy?" Why? Cause if he wanted to dawdle in a toy store with Thomas the Tank Engine, she'd let him, whereas the parents were always shopping too fast."

So one of the things we can do is give specific examples of where our tempo, our voice tones, the words we use would help somebody calm a child down so they don't get freeze, fight, flight where the muscles get so tense. When I was doing assessments with one child, I used to wear long Indian beads, and the mother said, "Don't touch Dr. Honig's beads!" So, of course, his arm got tense, and what happened? He pulled at the beads, and they broke. But if you'd say, "Oh, do you want to touch the beads gently? Do you like the lady's beads?" Then he could have patted them gently and I would have still had a necklace of beads.

So it's the tempo, the voice tone. We can help that, and if she has troubles with that, then we have to model it by the way we talk to a parent, also, not didactically as if we are so superior. And often I'll ask a parent, "What do you do to get your child to smile or laugh more when you are at home?" And the more you ask a Socratic question, you are giving power to that parent. When you give power to a parent, they can calm down. They feel more powerful, not that you are some big supervisor or teacher or home visitor.

And also be respectful. So when Henrietta came on an early March day where we still have snow and she said, "Could you get me some newspapers, please? I don't want to leave my muddy, snowy boots. I don't want to track them in your house." The mom looked at her, she said, "Sure." But the next week, she didn't have wet diapers all over the house. 'Cause Henrietta told me she didn't have a place to sit down. But somehow the respect for that parent helped her to self-regulate. And then if you do that, you are a better model for your child. Thank you for asking.

Moderator: Right. "How can we help families to understand the importance of daily routines in the household when sometimes their lives are pretty hectic and implementing regular routines is challenging? Is there one main takeaway or suggestion that could be most impactful?"

Dr. Honig: Well, you can teach that babies are the world's greatest conservatives. They don't want any change. If you read a book that says, you know... and you change one word in what you read, they'll say, "Say it the way it is supposed to be." If you do one thing different, little kids will teach you, "That's not how my mommy said. That's not how my teacher said." Kids are really — They need to feel secure by knowing what routines are like.

And I admire you as a parent because sometimes your life and routines are bollixed up. Your boss asks you to work a night shift instead of a day shift, and you are searching for care for your child. Boy, things are hard for you sometimes. And if you have troubles getting home late, make sure you put in the refrigerator little tiny things that a child can eat that are safe for him. You take off your clothes. I call it... Your outer clothes, not your inner clothes. Unarmoring. Unarmor yourself from your fancy clothes, plop on the couch, take the stuff out of the fridge, and sit down and munch and cuddle together. And that will

make the child calm down even though you had to be late at work and your sitter or your daycare had to keep that child.

Because things happen in life. But for the child, remember, they like things the way they are used to them. Otherwise, they get scared. Look what happens when you get that stranger anxiety. They are okay to six to eight months, and then I have a different face from the one I'm used to, my mama, papa, my sitter, my nanny, my childcare worker. And then they'll get very upset and scared of the new. The new is really hard to decipher for little kids. Try to talk to a parent about how if they were plunked down in a strange country with very different customs how they would feel, so they get a feel for what the baby or the young child is feeling. That might help.

Moderator: You are wonderful. So we really enjoyed hearing from you today. We've run out of time. I know we would have much more dialogue with you if we had the opportunity. But before we go, there were a couple of questions that I wanted to understand about the no-no poem, where that came from. And the researcher that you mentioned that was from another country, I can't remember the country.

Dr. Honig: The Van den Boom work in Holland?

Moderator: The Holland work, yes.

Dr. Honig: Her name is Daphne van den Boom. V-A-N D-E-N, capital B-O-O-M. And I thought that was superb research to take 100 very, very overexcitable, feisty, irritable babies in very poor families, randomly assign them to two different things, the home visitor who could teach skills for comforting and soothing and heading off overstimulation, and then at one year, the miracle, a perfectly normal percentages of secure attachment.

I thought that was marvelous work. When there is a researcher who does good work, bring it in, share it with your colleagues, because that's good ammunition for us all to know. Thank you for asking about that. I, too, admired that enormously. Yeah.

Moderator: Thank you so much.